

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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O 291548Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1107

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 0863

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CG US PC

SUBJECT: GOZ REQUEST FOR REMOVAL OF PEACE CORPS FROM ZAIRE

1. FOREIGN MINISTER BULAR MANDUNGU JAN 29 AFTER TEN MINUTES AMIABLE CHAT ABOUT OTHER MATTERS (SEE SEPTTEL) SAID PRESIDENT MOBUTU HAD HAD LONG AND EXCELLENT RELATIONS WITH AMBASSADOR VANCE AND THAT THEY TOGETHER HAD WORKED OUT ARRANGMENT FOR PEACE CORPS TO COME TO ZAIRE. RECENTLY, HOWEVER, SECURITY SERVICES HAD REPORTED THAT CERTAIN MEMBERS OF THE PEACE COPRS WERE NOT IN ACCORD WITH CERTAIN MEASURES OF THE GOVERNMENT OF ZAIRE RELATING TO RELIGION. THERE WERE INDIVIDUALS IN KIVU WHO ACTING IN GOOD CONSCIENCE AS CHRISTIAN AMERICANS HAD INTERVENED IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF THE COUNTRY.

2. I EXPRESSED SURPRISE, WILLINGNESS TO TAKE CORRECTIVE ACTION, AND ASKED FOR THE NAMES AND CIRCUMSTANCES. THE MINISTER SAID HE HAD LETTER FOR ME WHICH HE THEN GOT OFF HIS DESK. I READ LETTER (SEE SEPTTEL) AND SAID WHILE IT WAS PERFECTLY CLEAR THAT IF GOVERNMENT OF ZAIRE DID NOT WISH PEACE CORPS IN KIVU, IT STILL SEEMED RATHER EXTREME TO ASK ALL IN KIVU TO LEAVE BECAUSE CERTAIN UNIDENTIFIED INDIVIDUALS HAD ENGAGED IN OBJECTIONABLE ACTIVITIES. I SAID I WOULD BE GRATEFUL FOR THE NAMES OF THOSE INVOLVED AND COULD PROMISE PROMPT REMEDIAL ACTION.

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3. HE SAID THAT THE CABINET HAD DECIDED THAT AS IN

CASES OF ARMY MUTINY WHERE THERE WERE SOME DISCONTENTS, ONE HAD TO DEAL WITH THE ENTIRE UNIT. I THEN SAID THERE WAS YET ANOTHER CONSIDERATION. THE PEACE CORPS TRAINING SCHOOL MADE AVAILABLE BY THE GOVT OF ZAIRE WAS IN KIVU AND THAT SCHOOL WAS WHERE VOLUNTEERS THROUGHOUT ZAIRE RECEIVED THEIR TRAINING FROM GOVT INSTRUCTORS AND OTHERS, INCLUDING TRAINING ON HOW THEY WERE TO COMPORT THEMSELVES IN A NON-POLITICAL WAY AND WORK WITH RESPECT FOR THE ZAIROIS HOSTS AND SUPERIORS. IF KIVU WERE CLOSED, IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO MAINTAIN ANY VOLUNTEERS IN ZAIRE. HE SAID EXACTLY. THE CABINET'S DECISION WAS THAT ALL PEACE CORPS ACTIVITIES SHOULD CEASE.

4. I REREAD THE PARAGRAPHS RE KIVU OUT LOUD TO HIM AND SAID IT DID NOT SAY THAT. HE SAID THAT WAS WHAT WAS MEANT. HE ASKED IF THERE WERE VOLUNTEERS ELSEWHERE THAN IN KIVU. I REPLIED THAT THEY WERE IN ALL PARTS OF ZAIRE AND HE SAID THAT ALL WOULD HAVE TO LEAVE. I RETURNED TO POINT THAT ACTION SEEMED ALL OUT OF PROPORTION TO ALLEGED OFFENSE AND THAT SINCE IN FACT PEACE CORPS DIRECTOR WAS CONSTANTLY IN RECEIPT OF REQUESTS FOR MORE VOLUNTEERS, I FOUND IT HARD TO BELIEVE THAT PROPOSED ACTION WAS IN INTERESTS OF ZAIRE. AS FOR THE STATEMENT THAT I HAD NOT INFORMED THE GOVT OF THE SITUATION IN KIVU, I COULD ONLY SAY THAT HAVING BEEN UNAWARE OF T#3SE CHARGES OR ANY GROUNDS FOR THEM, I WAS NOT IN A POSITION TO INFORM THE GOVT.

5. HE THEN SAID THAT WE COULD OF COURSE TAKE WHATEVER TIME WAS WANTED TO CLOSE DOWN THE PROGRAM AND THAT I SHOULD LET HIM KNOW WHEN THE VOLUNTEERS WOULD BE FREE TO BE RECEIVED BY THE PRESIDENT WHO WISHED PERSONALLY TO EXPRESS HIS THANKS TO THEM. HE THOUGHT THAT SINCE THERE WAS DIFFERENCE OF CONSCIENCE INVOLVED, IT WAS BETTER TO CLOSE THE PROGRAM OUT SINCE ITS CONTINUED EXISTENCE WOULD ENDANGER COOPEARTION BETWEEN ZAIRE AND THE US.

6. I THEN SAID I WOULD CONTACT PEACE COPRS DIRECTOR URGENTLY AND SUGGESTED THAT AFTER DISCUSSING SITUATION
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WITH HIM THAT WE RETURN FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION WITH FOREIGN MINISTER. HE AGREED AND SAID HE WOULD SEE US WHENEVER IT WAS CONVENIENT FOR US. I AGAIN ASKED FOR NAMES AND CIRCUMSTANCES. HE GAVE NO INDICATION THAT THEY WOULD BE FORTHCOMING. IN LEAVING I ASKED THAT HE INFORM THE PRESIDENT OF MY VIEW THAT MEASURES SEEMED EXTREME AND OF MY PREFERENCE AND OUR WILLINGNESS TO DEAL WITH SPECIFIC CASES. AS FOR THE REQUEST THAT

WE KEEP MATTER PRIVATE, I SAID I CERTAINLY AGREED AND
WOULD NOT MYSELF DISCUSS WITH PRESS BUT THERE WAS NO
CONCEIVABLE WAY THAT REMOVAL OF PEACE CORPS FROM
ZAIRE COULD BE KEPT OUT OF AMERICAN PRESS.

7. PRELIMINARY COMMENT AND INITIAL RECOMMENDATION
FOLLOWS SEPTEL.
HINTON

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